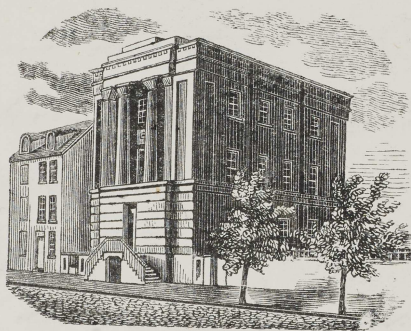


AN ESSAY ON
Phthisis Pulmonalis,

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE



HOMŒOPATHIC MEDICAL COLLEGE

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*On the 23d. day of January, Eighteen Hundred and
Fifty-six.*

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(11)
Phthisis Pulmonalis—

This disease is peculiar to no age, no race, no rank, and no climate. It knocks at the door of all, though not with equal step. Mother and maid, the sweet babe, the youth in life's green spring, manhood's prime, and hoary age; all meet and fall before this fell disease. Saxon and Celt, Indian and African, Cottage and Palace; all know but too well its features, and shrink as from the face of death. The frozen North and the sunny South are no strangers to its visits, but its chosen home is in our Temperate zone; its choicest victims are our loveliest and our best; it leaves a shining mark. The course of Phthisis is usually marked by three stages; the first second gliding almost insensibly into the last. The symptoms of the first stage vary. Generally there is a slight, dry, hacking cough, followed after a time by

(27)
expectoration of mucus, and then of yellowish
opaque matter. The appetite is good and the
strength little, if any, diminished. But the
patient gets tired easily, and sometimes breathes
with difficulty. In the second stage, decided
symptoms are established; the countenance is
characteristic, the eyes are generally painfully
brilliant, sometimes dull staring. The patient can
lie on one side better than the other, and
sometimes only on the back. Emaciation com-
-mences. The pulse is increased to 120 & 140 per
minute. He thinks it strange that he does not
get rid of his cold, but he has no fears until
a hemorrhage occurs. But this yields to medi-
-cal treatment, his cough is less violent,
and he thinks he is getting better. After a
time the cough becomes worse, breaking the
rest at night, in violent paroxysms.
Breathing is more difficult, the pulse is
quick, the face is flushed, the tongue is

furrowed, there is little appetite, there is night
sweat, and the third stage is approaching.

In this, the symptoms of the first and second
are aggravated. Besides them, the matter thrown
out is purulent, mixed with softened tubercles
in the shape of yellowish substance. The cough
is much more in the morning, on account
of the accumulation of the night. The face
is now hectic. Chills occasionally come on,
and cease, and come again, without any
assignable cause. The night sweats are
profuse and debilitating. Blood is occasionally
discharged from the lungs, but less than at
first. The purulent expectorations are very
copious. As the disease advances the stomach
and lungs become involved. Diarrhea exhausts
the patient. The voice is inaudible and
breathing is very difficult. The chest becomes
flat, the cheeks are hollow, the eyes are sunken,
the shoulders round, the clavicles prominent.

The mind is clear and hopeful. The feet become cold & swell - and at last sometimes a slight delirium occurs. The patient is too weak to expectorate, there is now no cough, the pus accumulates, and breathing ceases. These symptoms vary, and the most usual course of the disease only has been traced. This course is often arrested by pregnancy, and in puerperium is significant of cases where the disease has been held in abeyance for years during childbearing, to return with terrible increase after the turn of life, hurrying its victims to the grave in a few months. The duration of Phthisis varies greatly; it has run its course in less than a month, and it has lingered for near half a century. Most cases end in the second year. "Consumption" in the language of an able writer. "May be traced back to the earliest periods of Medical history. Hippocrates, commonly styled the father of

Medicine; then it, and has well described its
melancholic course, and things ages have
rolled on with all these changes, this Lane
of human life, still remains the same, has
never abated in its fatality—never rested
in its work of destruction. Various opin-
ions prevail even at the present day, as regards
the real nature of tubercles. The works of
Laennec, Bayle, Louis and others have render-
ed our knowledge of the morbid anatomy of
tubercles more complete, than that of any
other morbid product. But our limited space
forbids me entering into this branch of our sub-
ject. Suffice it for the present to say that tuber-
culous matter, or tubercles, are in consistence
firm but friable, of a yellow or greyish color,
and unctuous to the feel, insoluble in water,
sinking when placed in it, without smell, ho-
mogeneous & unorganized. Tubercles vary in
size from that of a granule to the diameter of

half an inch. They are not confined to the lungs, but are found in the heart, liver, throat, intestines, brain &c.

In speaking of the predisposing causes of Phthisis, inheritance comes first in influence. It is often inherited from one parent, almost invariably from both. We often see whole families cut down one by one as they reach maturity. Even when one generation escapes, it is apt to appear in the next. Cold is perhaps next in influence. On this account phthisis is more prevalent in cold than in warm climates. Negroes are more sensitive to cold, than whites, and are more subject to this disease in cold climates. Whatever tends to produce continued debility may generate a Consumptive diathesis. Scrophula, common colds, abuse of marching, neglect of early symptoms, diminution of the capacity of the chest, from a habit of stooping,

(17)
and from tight lacing, indolence and dependence;
-cy; grief, anxiety, intense mental application,
want of exercise, doing much business, sitting,
and sleeping in overheated and ill ventilated
apartments, sleeping on feather beds, and
frequenting crowded assemblies, living in
cellars, and dark gloomy apartments, where
the sun seldom enters, have all been fore-
-runners of this disease. It occurred post haec,
and probably propter haec. All of these causes
result in debility, delicacy, effeminacy, and
aversion to all occupation, a state of body
and mind which is soon to be followed by
Consumption. So long as children are brought
up on feather beds, and fed on sweet meats
and delicacies and drugged with hot tea &
Coffee, and indulged in exemption from
all industrious and laborious pursuits, so
long will they continue to fade like hot-
house plants. These mistaken notions, are

almost peculiar to this country. While our
ladies and children, are all night constantly
in the house, growing delicate and effeminate,
the ladies and children of Europe are out
labouring or walking in the open air -
It is a mistaken notion among American
ladies that delicacy is beauty - this is not
beauty - health is beauty. But perhaps the
greatest of all causes of acquired Consumption,
is the result of long continued Masturbation.
The delicacy of this subject, no doubt often
prevents physicians from speaking of it to
parents and their children; but this
secret vice is spreading a fall over our
land, and it is the duty of every physician
to lend a helping ^{hand} to parents, to arrest its
baneful influence.

Of exciting causes, we may mention cold,
producing by producing Catarrhs, pneumonia
and pleurisy. Acid gases and vapors

when inhaled, irritating powder, violent exertion of the lungs, may all be classed under this head. Women are more subject to this disease than men. Their organization is more delicate, Their habits are more sedentary. They wear thinner shoes, they lace tighter. They have to be up at night in the cold with children. All these causes tend to multiply cases of this disease among them. Perhaps they are taller than men, and when the Gods love die young. We lay no great stress however on this last consideration.

Occupation undoubtedly has something to do with Consumption. Wares, tailors, milliners, seamstresses, teachers, nurses, monks, and jail birds are peculiarly liable to it. While farmers and out-door mechanics are seldom attacked by it. of all diseases this is

the favorite one of Quacks. Acute diseases
and the cat's paw life too expedient to give them
fair scope for their operations. But in this
everything continues to give them full and
free play. Obstinate ignorance and flattering
hope unite to fill his sails, and form the
cloud to huck in golden drops over his head.
The humane, enlightened, physician, too honest
to deceive, is put aside for the Charlatan,
who promises a speedy remedy, a remedy that
has already cured thousands, is destined to
cure myriads, that has never failed to reach
the most obstinate case, a remedy discovered,
like this Continent, only after long, protracted
study, and attempts often baffled. Indomi-
table perseverance had at length found its
reward, the magic compound was at last
revealed, the goddess of health smiled benignly
on her favorite son, hope revives in the hearts
of afflicted sufferers, and Phthisis pulmonalis,

that for long ages has gone forth conquering,
 and to conquer, feels that his work is done,
 surrenders arms, and retires, discomfited from
 the field. Yet this benefactor of the world
 is doomed to opposition. When did truth
 lack foes? Galileo was imprisoned for
 his discoveries, and like Galileo he is
 willing to suffer, if but the world is benefited.
 The number of these public benefactors is
 beyond computation. Our own Country is
 a nursery for them as well as for heroes.
 This City of brotherly love has furnished its
 full quota. Magnificent stone buildings
 peer, being endowed with all healing
 expectorants, warranted to keep in any climate,
 to be well shaken before taken. The age is
 weary with reading the panegyrics of these
 institutions. Language is fable to paint their
 merits. Certificates from the most respectable
 sources, confound all gainsayers. Even the most

judicious and sceptical are constrained in
the face of such facts, to cry out "Maybe there
is something in this after all. Then an Smith
and Brown and Jones, whom I know well, and
who had the Consumption beyond a doubt,
that certify that this medicine has actually
restored them to perfect health. I may as
well try a bottle. It is only a dollar, and
can't do much harm anyhow, if it does
me good." And so every mind that thus,
thus goes to this public benefactor, who
with well lined pockets in a few years
retires from business, reposing on the laurels,
his assurance and mendacity have won.
Year after year the same tragic farce is
acted over and over again. All the fools
are now dead; and till the head is extinct,
quacks will live and flourish. If our
public schools taught even the first and
plainest principles of physiology, their might

to some hope of stating this evil. For
how even Protestants will admit that "Ignorance
is the mother of Devotion" to the goddess
Humbly; though in this case tis far
from true that "Ignorance is this" and
hence "tis folly to be wise".

In the treatment of this disease, it is generally
agreed among honest, cultivated physicians,
that medicines are of little avail. And
those whose experience has been the largest
give the least medicines. Occasionally some
sanguine practitioners fancy they have found
a remedy, from observing the beneficial effects
of his prescriptions in a few cases that come
under his notice. But the relief proves only
a temporary one, and the conviction forced
upon his mind is that except in its in-
-ipient stage, the help of man is vain. And
how lies the difficulty. So deceptive is this
disease, so insidious in its approaches, that

no danger is apprehended till it is too late
to ward it off. The heart craves peace, peace,
when there is no peace. And in a vast
majority of cases all that is left is, to smooth
the pathway to the tomb.

So far as the tubercular diathesis is understood,
it consists in a depreciation of the general
tone and vigor of the system and of the
character of the blood. The object is then to
restore vigor to the system, and health to
the blood. No preventive and hygienic agents
are more simple and familiar, and none
more salutary and efficacious, than the in-
halation of pure fresh air, and the taking of
suitable exercise. Not exercise for five minutes
a day, bundled up in flannels; but continual
regular exercise for months and years. This
should not be so violent, as to greatly fatigue,
but should be gradually increased as the
strength will allow. Neither should it be

discontinued when the mercury sinks in the
thermometer. With feet properly protected, and
skin cleaned by daily ablutions, the patient
will find the cold only bracing and exhilarating.
Some physicians entertain the notion that
when a person is threatened with disease
he must at once be removed to a well-
heated apartment, and avoid the fresh
air, as though it were poison to him. No mis-
take could possibly be more fatal, none
further from sound medical philosophy;
and no error will with more certainty fasten
upon the misguided patient the very disease
he seeks to avert. Gymnastics, gardening,
hunting, fishing, swimming, and riding,
in a carriage or on horseback, all afford
exhilarating and salutary exercise. Long
journeys on horseback or daily rides of ten or
twenty miles have been found highly beneficial.
The greatest difficulty is in inducing the patient

to preserve in this course. Hence the chances
are greatly in his favor who is compelled by
his business to take such exercise. Persons
inclined to consumption, on entering the
military service, have entirely overcome
the disease, and in common life, mechanics
have a much better prospect of securing their
men of sedentary habits.

Next to exercise in importance, is a proper
temperature of body. The influence of cold is
very depressing, but this is to be guarded against
not by shutting oneself up in the chimney
corner all winter. By doing this, he loses
the benefit of fresh air and exercise, which are
of first importance, while temperature is only
of secondary. Rather let him protect himself
against it by daily washings and proper clothing,
guarding his feet especially and avoiding
exposure to currents of air while in perspi-
ration. Every person of a Consumptive Complexion

tation should be flavoured under their skins;
it stimulates the skin, catches the insensate
preparations, and in case of a slight exposure
to a draft of air, or to a cold apartment,
it guards against taking cold. If his
residence is subject to sudden atmospheric
changes, it may be well for him to seek a
climate dry and of uniform temperature.
On the other hand, too great heat, is almost as
bad as too great cold. Hence a residence
during the heats of summer in a mountain-
ous region may be beneficial.

The diet is of great importance in Consump-
tion. As the object is to impart vigor, while
guarding against inflammation, the most nu-
tritious unstimulating food should be taken.

Fruits and vegetables are most suitable.
The more exercise, the more food, is a good
rule. As far as may be the mind should be
kept quiet, and all disturbing influences be

carefully shut out. Disappointed affection pangs
like a wound in the bud. Failed ambition eats
like a canker. Travelling is often beneficial,
not only on account of the exercise, but as
drawing off the mind to agreeable objects, in-
stead of feeding on itself. It may not be out
of place to suggest, that a well grounded, firm
religious faith, with its cherished hopes, will
be a stay and solace when all else fails.
It has been already said that in this disease
medicine is of little avail; yet in conjunction
with the measures, we have recommended, we have
many remedies in our Materia Medica, which have
proved highly beneficial in many cases, in their
incipient stages - among the most prominent
are the following, - phos. hepaticus, sulph. Cal. Carb.,
merc. Stannum, silicea, sulph. el. jecoris aselli,
acid. phos. iodine, china, puls. santhali, and
Gespodinum.